IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 3, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 24 and 25 to read as follows. Copies of the amended claims, marked to show changes from their prior versions, are presented in the Appendix attached hereto.

1.   (Amended) A method for classifying assets into business sectors, said method comprising:

(a) calculating, for each of plural exogenous variables, a measure of a tendency for a value of an asset to change as a result of a change in a data value for said each exogenous variable;

(b) repeating step (a) for each of plural different assets; and

(c) grouping said plural different assets into plural different sectors based on similarities of said measures of tendency to change.

3.   (Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein step (a) comprises:

(a1) processing historical data for value of the asset and historical data values for said plural exogenous variables to obtain a price formula for estimating the value of the asset as a function of the exogenous variables; and

(a2) taking a derivative of the price formula to obtain a formula expressing said tendency to change.

8.   (Amended) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising a step of calculating a representative characteristic of assets in a specific sector used in step (c).

9.   (Amended) A method according to Claim 8, further comprising a step of comparing a characteristic of a specific asset in said specific sector to the representative characteristic of assets in said specific sector.

11.   (Amended) A method according to Claim 8, wherein said representative characteristic comprises an average return to assets in said specific sector.

14.   (Amended) A method according to Claim 13, further comprising a step of tracking a position of a particular asset over time relative to its assigned sector.

15.   (Amended) A method according to Claim 13, further comprising a step of tracking reclassification of a particular asset from a first sector to a second sector.

17.   (Amended) A method according to Claim 16, further comprising steps of:

calculating plural samples of said measure of tendency to change using said formula for each of said plural different assets; and

using said samples in step (c) for grouping said plural different assets into said plural different sectors.

18.   (Amended) A method according to Claim 17, wherein said measure of tendency to change is calculated in step (a) for each of the plural different assets using historical data values for said exogenous variables over a same period of time.

20.   (Amended) A method according to Claim 1, step (a) comprises a step of processing historical data for value of the asset and historical data values for said plural exogenous variables to obtain a price formula for estimating the value of the asset as a function of the exogenous variables.

24.   (Amended) An apparatus for classifying assets into business sectors, said apparatus comprising:

(a) means for calculating, for each of plural exogenous variables, a measure of a tendency for a value of an asset to change as a result of a change in a data value for said each exogenous variable;

(b) means for repeating the calculating performed by means (a) for each of plural different assets; and

(c) means for grouping said plural different assets into plural different sectors based on similarities of said measures of tendency to change.

25.   (Amended) A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable process steps for classifying assets into business sectors, said process steps comprising steps to

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(a) calculate, for each of plural exogenous variables, a measure of a tendency for a value of an asset to change as a result of a change in a data value for said each exogenous variable;

(b) repeat step (a) for each of plural different assets; and

(c) group said plural different assets into plural different sectors based on similarities of said measures of tendency to change.

Please add claims 26 and 27 as follows:

--26. A method according to Claim 1, wherein each of plural different assets comprises a share of stock.

27. A method according to Claim 1, wherein each of plural different assets comprises a bond.--
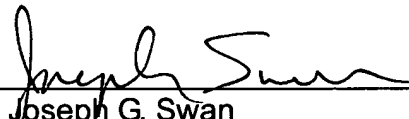
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Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: April 6, 2001

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